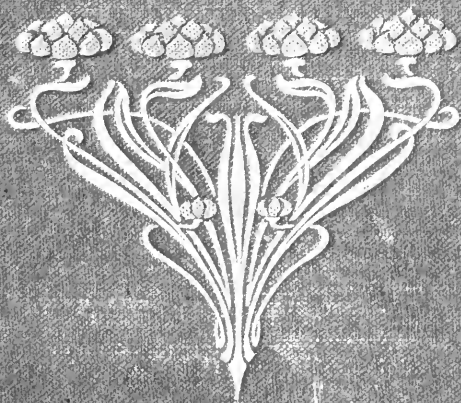
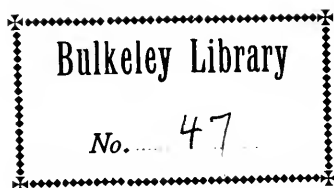


THE PLACE OF MY DESIRE
AND OTHER POEMS

BY EDITH COLBY BANFIELD





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PREFACE.

EDITH COLBY BANFIELD was born February 14, 1870, in Washington, D.C. She was the daughter of Everett C. Banfield and Anne S. Fiske, the only sister of Helen Jackson ("H.H."). She was graduated from Vassar College in 1892. A large part of her life was spent at the old home in Wolfeboro, on the shore of Lake Winnepesaukee, but during the three years before her death her home was in Colorado Springs, where she died suddenly, March 30, 1903.

The poems in this little book have been chosen from among the papers left at her death. A few have already been published: "Glamour" in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Homesickness" and "Night on the Desert" in the *Century*, others in the *Outlook*, the *Dial*, and elsewhere, — but most of them were being held by her to be moulded into more perfect form. Any alteration by another hand than hers was not to be considered, and such poems

and parts of poems as are here brought together stand, word for word, as she left them. It is not, therefore, as finished or even as mature work that they should be judged. Many of them were written during her college days,—naïve, light, incomplete perhaps, though never crude and never insincere,—while at their best they are but the tentative and fragmentary expression of an artist who was still striving for mastery of her chosen instrument. In the attainment of such mastery her hand was stayed, but the little it had wrought comes to us, in its exquisite grace, in its strong yet gentle beauty, in the simplicity of its complete sincerity, as the expression of a rare and lovely spirit.

E. E. M.

E. W. M.

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*ALL out along the country-side
The little untaught wild flowers grow,
Where men may pick them as they go,
To carry, maybe, for a day,
And then fling carelessly away.*

*If so my little verses here
Shall bring some touch of grace or cheer
To any traveller by the way,
And brighten but a single day,
My heart is glad and satisfied.*

On Poesy.

WHEN I consider how all language lies
Before me like a vast, exhaustless sea,
On which I choose to venture, daring-wise
In this so fragile bark of Poesy ;
When I consider what new worlds of thought
Beyond the dim-defined horizon lie,
Whereto some navigator may be brought —
And if some other seeker, why not I ? —
Then am I thrilled, like mariners of old
Who trimmed their sails for undiscovered shore,
And doubted if they were but over-bold,
Nor knew the deep that they must voyage o'er,
Yet fearless sought those unseen countries far,
O'er chartless seas, beneath the lone north star.

FOR this do me no honor, dear my friend,
That I a setting of some sort have wrought
To hold the scattered pearls of thine own
thought,
And their fair beauties to unite and blend.
But let me honor thee, so free to wend
Along the bolder ways, that thou hast brought
My life a richness it in vain had sought
Within the circle where my days I spend.
Thy thoughts are free wild birds thou canst not
catch
To put within the sonnet's gilded bars,
But of their untamed singing mine do snatch
A melody of wind and woods and stars :
As caged mocking-birds will steal the song
Of sunlit orioles that flash along.

TO him who reads it, poetry doth seem
Like any quiet, leafy-bordered stream,
Whereby 't is pleasant of an afternoon
To sit and see the silver ripples run,
And listen for the calling of the loon,
And watch the downward journey of the sun ;
To hear the little border whisperings
And meditate on many gentle things ;
And when the heart of beauty hath its fill
To rise and follow on one's homeward way
In peace, while that sweet river's presence still
Doth cast a glamour o'er the closing day.
So is not poetry to him who writes.
Ah me, it is a fever in the blood
That keeps him tossing many weary nights,
While round about him doth the darkness brood ;
It is a wild delirium of mind
For which no healing can physician find ;
No dulling drug his madness can abate.
For him are cooling waters cool in vain,
And loving hands cannot alleviate,
By soothing touch, the throbbing of his brain !

IN POETRY'S HIGH TOWER.

UP in this belfry tower of poetry
I flee disquiet and the vexing things
Left far and dim below. 'Mid fluttering wings
I overlook the city under me,
I see the morning break upon the sea,
And watch the westward spires where evening
 clings :
Yea, this old bell, obedient that rings,
I even waken, halt and tremblingly.
Could I but ring it as blind Milton rung,
I would not need to see the morning light ;
What sounds would issue from its mighty
 tongue,
More strong than death, more comforting than
 sight !
Ah, let no weakling think he can regain
One single peal of that triumphant strain !

SONGS.

SOME songs there are that whisper like the
wind
Of far-off countries and of gentle climes ;
And some that murmur like the distant sea
Of life and death and wide eternity ;
And some there are that ring like silver chimes
Across the barren moors ; and some whose knell
Is like the tolling of a funeral bell ;
And some whose melodies go blowing by
Like summer sounds beneath a summer sky.
O songs of sweetness, were I deaf and blind,
This dear old world were yet unlost to me
While still your measures stirred within my
mind !

AT TWILIGHT.

I.

THERE comes a time of day when I would
fain
Sit down to some belovèd instrument,
And with impassioned hands and eyes down-
bent,
Disburden me of my remembered pain ;
Pour out my heart's dear joy in some wild strain,
Or voice those mingled moods wherein are blent
A cherished sadness and divine content,
With all the longings twilight hath in train.
Alàs, that I am not sweet music's child,
That my untutored fingers cannot free
The melodies that make my heart so wild !
Yet shall they not remain unvoicèd things ;
The sonnet shall be little harp to me,
And I 'll pluck music from its golden strings.

II.

A LITTLE lyre of fragile-fashioned grace,
Whereon I'll weave some air in minor
key,

And by the phrasing of that melody
Ease my heart's fulness for a little space ;
Whereon I'll thread my song, and interlace
The notes that are persuasive unto me,
Returning to them as delayingly
As e'er the daylight doth her steps retrace.
So then my soul in silence shall not sit
At that sweet hour when music comes to woo,
And shadow-fancies through the gloaming flit :
Of twilight solace I shall have my share,
And through the dreamy darkness will I too
Pour out my plaint upon the burdened air.

THE MUSE.

HER hand is heavy on me : I must write
Her bidding ere she let me go.

She standeth stern : with unrelenting sight
She sees the words come faltering and slow
And strikes aside my hand and takes the pen,
And writes a swift and perfect line

Upon my faulty page — and then,
“ Match now thy writing unto mine ! ”

Her hand is heavy on me and I write,
Through days of weariness and nights of pain
I do her bidding as her bond slave might,
Untouched by future hope or dream of gain.

A LONG the edges of the night
My little rhymes do peep and steal,
And oftentimes in dreams I feel
Their tiny footsteps falling light,
Or hear their roguish whispers burn
Beside my pillow as I turn ;
And vainly do I bid them cease
And let me slumber on in peace.
The sprites but mock me as they prance
And wind about in teasing dance.
But when I wake, the broad daylight
Doth startle them to sudden flight,
And then I coax and try to keep
Those small disturbers of my sleep !

I WROTE in tears, in scalding tears,
A blithesome little roundelay,
And sent it in its lightsome way.
Ah me, I wonder if it cheers,
Or whether in its measure gay
Some finer ears
Detect the beat of falling tears !

The English Poets
and
Other Sonnets.

I.

I HAVE not been in England. Nay, and yet
My spirit there hath ever been at home,
And I since childish days have seemed to roam
Through beechen groves, and watched the sun-
light fret
The English greensward ; hedges dewy-wet
Have blushed in blossomed by-ways of my
dream,
And by the grassy margin of some stream
Have plucked me cowslips for a coronet.
Poets of England, ye it is have made
That England is to every one his own ;
Ye have acquainted us with wood and glade
And golden daffodils by lake-winds blown,
At your sweet summons have we sought the
shade
To learn how sings the nightingale alone.

II.

I HAVE not been in England. Nay, have not,
Yet have I seen her palaces and towers,
And I have seen the sunlight break in showers
Upon her minster spires. From some high spot
I, even as the Lady of Shalott,
Have counted many knights and pages gay,
And watched the river winding on its way
To the dim pinnacles of Camelot.
Poets of England, ye the charmèd glass
(Save that the charm hath not a touch of ill)
Wherein I see my lords and ladies pass,
And those sweet waters flowing at their will.
Ah, what though they but shadows be, alas,
If as I spin I can but see them still ?

CHAUCER.

THY words are like a sweet, refreshing
shower

To one who travels on a dusty way :
Thou breathest of the hawthorn boughs of May,
And ledest one as to a pleasant bower
Where, hidden in the tangled leaf and flower,
Some little bird pours forth his roundelay ;
Then out again to meet the golden day
In open meadows with their starry dower.
Ah, Chaucer ! thou art like a little child
Who prattles all the day for very glee,
And forces old and grave to be beguiled
With woven tales and winsome imagery ;
Nor more than any child dost thou surmise
How in simplicity thy heart is wise !

CHAUCER AND KEATS.

YE are my morning poets, like the dawn
In loveliness and bright simplicity ;
So full of a sweet wonderment to me
That from old Earth such newness can be drawn.
The dewy daisies waking on the lawn,
The golden buttercups abroad the lea
Seem not more fresh, more virginal to be
Than your clear verses, of their beauty born.
I tiptoe stand upon a little hill,
O Keats, with you, and feel the world a-thrill ;
I read my Chaucer through your youthful eyes
For sake of one small verse that made me wise ;
And morning holds you both forever bright
With dews and freshness and the early light.

SHAKESPEARE.

GLAD have I drunk of Chaucer's living
 spring,
And I have followed Spenser's silver stream
Through new-awakened meadows ; traced the
 gleam
Of many fertile rivers issuing :
In sterner regions I have heard the roll
Of Milton's torrent harmonies, that sweep
Reverberating chords through chasms deep ;
And in pure waters have I seen the soul
Of gentle Keats. But Shakespeare ! Ah, the
 sea,
With its great pulses throbbing mightily,
Bears all the commerce of our human-kind,
And touches every shore in friendliness.
A trackless thoroughfare, and measureless
As the eternal ocean, is that mind !

WORDSWORTH.

WHEN quiet lights steal down the after-
noon

And hills stretch out, and purple shadows lie
Along their lengthening slopes ; then, pensive, I
Dream of the English Lakes and their rich boon.
I have not seen their sunsets and their noon,
But I behold with an awakened eye
The loveliness beneath my native sky,
My own hill-girdled lake, whose waters croon
As when I was a child. Here it is sweet
To sit in humbleness at Wordsworth's feet
And with his eyes spell out the lettered hills,
While daylight fades, and lovely evening fills.
As peaceful as the declining end of day
Thy poems, Wordsworth, in my memory stay.

DE QUINCEY AND OUR LADIES OF
SORROW.

DREAMER of wild, unfathomable dreams,
Levana surely did deliver thee
To the strange dealings of those Sisters Three
Whom thou wast first to name. With starry
gleams
Came She of Tears to fill thine early days,
Then She of Sighs next had thee for her own,
And lastly She of Darkness — ah, make moan —
Did lead thee through the unutterable ways.
Assuredly did these lay bare to thee
The hidden things that man ought not to see,
And unto thy plagued spirit did unfold
Secrets unnameable and truths of old ;
And for a sign, did work thee gift of speech
That to all heights could scale, to all depths
reach.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

AUSTERE and pure, and steadfast as a star
Thy poet soul doth shine in beauty high,
Lovely as lonely, friendly though so far,
Uplifting hearts unto the solemn sky.
As doth some star gleam, on a winter's night,
Draw me from self and teach me to endure.
So am I lifted by thy spirit's light,
So by its shining am I made more pure.
Mournful indeed, as stars and oceans are,
And measured tides that 'neath the starlight roll,
Thy words from out the deep, across the bar,
Roll measured in, and break upon my soul,
Till I am filled with the solemnity
Of starlit heavens and unresting sea.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

O TUSITALA, teller of brave tales,
As children clamber to their father's
knee

To drink of stories while the twilight fails,
We in our gentler moments turn to thee !
A spell is in thy words, and none may leave
The charmed circle pressing to thy side
While thou the web of golden tales dost weave,
To hold us listening and open-eyed.
Dear Tusitala ! Ay, and more than this :
Thou hast the gift of love, that none may go
From out thy story-land but seems to miss
A bright and gracious presence, and to know
A tiny thing is all thy master's art
Beside thy loving, patient, human heart.

THE SIGN.

ALL things of beauty bear this single sign
That they do seem forever to have been,
That we of old their loveliness have known,
Or else have dreamed within a dream divine.
The poet in his perfect ordered line
Has only said what we did always mean,
The painter doth but bring to us our own,
And the musician that for which we pine.
So every little flower along the Spring
Is born to its perfection, nor could be
But just that sweet inevitable thing
Our hearts had visioned ere our eyes did see
And touch discover. So a lovely face
At first beholding wears familiar grace.

GLAMOUR.

O WONDER days when heart and I were
 young,
And all the world was radiant and new ;
When every little common flower that grew
Interpreted to me an unknown tongue,
Or seemed a fairy bell that late had rung
Its silver peal across the morning dew ;
When skies were tapestries of living blue,
And stars a mesh of jewels overhung !
Now is my happy youth fulfilled, and I
Am come to mine inheritance of pain ;
Yet does the brightness of the days gone by
Still cast a glory over hill and plain ;
Still can I go beneath the open sky
And feel the old world young and strange again.

HOW beautiful lies the dim-distanced Past,
With glint of turrets and of winding
streams,

With shadows luminous and cloudy gleams
Athwart the purple border region cast : —
A storied country, stretching vague and vast,
A wonderland of distances and dreams.
So fair, so far, so mystical, it seems
To draw down Heaven's garment and at last
To melt in atmosphere ! But lovely too
Is this dear Present with its glad, near view
Of life's most common things. We who find
sweet

The very dust and grass-blades at our feet,
Need not to look afar, but need how much
The comforting of nearness and of touch !

SPIRIT of incommunicable things,
How often in the silences of night
I seem to hear the rustling of thy wings,
And dream that thou art stooping to alight !
How often in the pauses of the day
I feel a sudden stirring of the air,
And waiting, breathless, hold me in the way,
If it so be that thou shalt linger there !
Spirit of incommunicable things,
Abroad forever on the winds of night,
Abroad forever over land and sea,
We may but hear the beating of thy wings,
The passing of thy shadow may but see,
Nor ever wilt thou tarry in thy flight !

TO A PINE-TREE.

O SOLITARY Pine, that hast forgot
The sweet security of comradeship,
The bleak powers compass thee, but swerve
 thee not,
Though all the winds of heaven be let slip,
And like a swift-surrounding angry tide
The elements beset thy giant form.
Thou grippest with thy roots the mountain-side,
And spreadest fearless branches to the storm.
O kingly-hearted, thou in solitude
Amid the buffetings and stress and strain
Hast wrought a largeness and a hardihood
Thy brethren of the forest may not gain ;
Yea, out of loneliness they may not guess
Hast thou achieved thy larger nobleness.

MOON-CLOUDS.

O FLEECY moonlit clouds that sweep the
night,

Wind-blown across the darkness of that blue,
White is the moon, but ye are yet more white,
More luminous, to my bewildered view !
So wonderful, so near in your wild haste
I seem upborne upon your silken fleece,
And strangely carried through the skyey waste
Where moon-beams flood, and great winds do
not cease.

Ye come on wings from the tumultuous west,
And cross the moon and melt away like dreams,
And still I follow on your fading quest
In that fair dreamland of white rifts and gleams,
And seem with you to melt to nothingness
In the great whirl of silent sweeping space !

SUNSET.

NOT only in the west the wonder lies,
But all the quiet east is overblown
With sunset-loosened clouds that float and rise
Like rosy dreams from out the fair unknown ;
That float and pass as over fields of sleep,
Or now with sudden passionateness pour
Like crested billows from some boundless deep,
Uprolling on the wide horizon shore.
Ah, brief as dreams are those soft-tinted clouds
That gather up the glory of the day
In one swift flush, ere fall the twilight shrouds
To wrap the world in shadow-mists of gray :
Too soon recede those sunset billows rolled
Along strange shores from out a sea of gold.

A TWILIGHT SONNET.

AS dies the music from the master's bow,
As fades the sunset from the western sky,
As faint the winds, until they also die,
So my sweet joys back into silence go.
As rivers to the great calm ocean flow,
So flow my griefs to their abiding sea,
And there are stilled into tranquillity
In silent depths that can no tumult know.
As little birds at night-time fold their wings
And come to rest upon the nearest bough,
My thoughts do all, like little tired things,
Drop down to rest, they care not where or how.
Then is my heart like to the twilight world
Where fitful winds are hushed, and flowers lie
furled.

AS little airs come blowing in all day
At every open window of the room,
Refreshing it, and making sweet its gloom
With scent of clover-fields and new-mown hay,
So fancies light come wandering my way,
And enter in, and fill the open room
Of my bare mind with memories of bloom
And breaths of beauty graciously astray.
And I within am grateful for this thing —
That thoughts are blown to me from this sweet
 world
Full of a loveliness that is not mine,
Full of a freshness somewhere caught a-wing
Along the morning's edge, from clouds rose-
 curled,
Or from the shaken dew-drops as they shine.

A GARDEN PRAYER.

IN one familiar garden let me grow,
Amid the sweetness of the things I love ;
Let me brush cheeks with blossoms that I know,
And reach to roses beckoning me above.
Of these accustomed dewes still let me drink,
And ever feel the morning on my face
Athwart these garden ways, and ever sink
Unto the slumberous night in this one place.
Transplant me not, O Gardener, but let be
My intertwined roots in this same spot
Where the glad earth received me. Here for me
Are all my joys, my loves. Transplant me not,
Lest spite of warmer soil and sunnier sky,
In my great loneliness I pine and die.

WITHIN a sheltered garden so to sit
Amid the Sabbath stillness of the air,
With fitful peal of church bells breaking it
And making it more musically fair ;
To feel the morning coolness on my face,
The freshness of God's morning in its dew,
To offer gratitude in grassy place
Mid beds of violets new-bathed and blue ;
This is to me the sweetness of the day,
The crowning loveliness of all the week ;
The hour of peace and perfectness ; the way
Wherein I find the blessing that I seek.
Then even is my heart a holy book,
Wherein for healing I may search and look.

THE FIELDS AGAINST THE SKY.

THESE quiet fields that rise against the sky,
From morning until evening do not cease
To give a sense of sweet security,
And fill my spirit with a gentle peace.
The haystacks outlined on their easy heights
Possess an incommunicable charm,
Awaken thoughts of coming winter nights,
And little cottages secure from harm.
Such friendliness there is in these fair slopes,
Such tranquil thought of earth and human-kind,
Yet also do they stir in me strange hopes,
And with strange longings tantalize my mind
Till like a child I think by mounting them
To reach and touch the very heaven's hem.

PARADISE ROAD, NEWPORT.

WORSHIP.

I WANDERED down the dim-lit forest aisles
 With brooding eyes and reverent, slow feet ;
 I saw the quiet arches over-meet,
 More fair than mediæval builded piles ;
 I traced the shadowy cathedral line,
 And heard the tiny choristers repeat
 Their Benedicite, up-singing sweet
 Above the surging octaves of the pines.
 Most holy high Cathedral of the wood
 Whose doors are ever open night and day
 That they who will may enter, it is good
 In thy great nave to linger and to pray,
 Thence from the silence and the solitude
 To go ennobled on the daily way.

THERE is a place beside a dewy wood,
A grassy hollow bordering the shade,
Where once I sudden chanced, and startled
stood,
Held in a breathless wonder, half afraid.
So fair anemones I had not seen
In all the places of the country side,
Such April snows upon such bank of green,
Such myriads of blossoms, starry-eyed !
Oh, sweet surprisal of a long-lost way,
How oft I chance upon thee in my heart,
How often stand within that yesterday,
Fresh marvelling, and feel the quick joy start,
And see again those blown anemones
Lift cool and white beneath the sheltering trees !

LAND AND SEA.

UNTO His peoples God hath given the land,
And there allows their petty ownerships,
Their little acres and asundered strips
Of titled earth, whereon their homes may stand ;
But He the sea reserveth in His hand,
And all the waters thereunto that flow ;
The ships thereon are free to come and go
By His sole sufferance ; strand to farthest strand
The continents like documents reveal
Man's superscription and his countersign
Traced on them legibly from line to line ;
But like a hidden scroll the sea doth bear
The single stamp of God's great signet-seal,
Nor could he break it, who should even dare !

THE SEA.

COULD I in numbers tell of the great sea,
And gather up the purport of the sound
Wherewith on many shores unceasingly
It makes its moan, the continents around ;
Could I its battlings understand aright,
As to the deep the tempest gives alarm,
Divine its passion on a moonlit night,
Or guess the secret underneath its calm, —
Then could I wrest the meaning out of life
And could unlock the door of my own heart,
Know the beginning and the end of strife,
And comprehend the purpose of the part
In the great whole — yea, by the burdened sea
Foreread the future and its mystery.

TO A PORTRAIT OF ABRAHAM
LINCOLN.

THY rugged features more heroic are
Than chiselled outlines of some godlike
Greek ;
Thy steadfast lips more eloquent did speak
Than lips of orators renowned afar ;
While gentle wit and tolerance of folly,
And human sympathies and love of right
Shone never with more kind and steady light
Than from the cavern of thy melancholy.
O prophet sorrowful, did thy deep eyes
Foresee and weep thy country's agonies ?
And did thy lonely heart foreread thy doom
To give thy brow such majesty of gloom ?
Ah, hadst thou seen the end, thou still hadst led
Thy people with the same unswerving tread !

“**T**HEY also serve who only stand and wait.”

How many hearts high words have comforted !
Dumb hearts and slow, that have no wit to
phrase

The plainest duty for themselves, are led
To brave endurance and to feats of praise
By some stern prophet's vigorous command.
As leaders call upon the battle-field,
And feeble knees grow strong and weapons yield
A sudden valor to the timid hand,
So do great words go ringing down the days,
And cowards follow in heroic ways.
But for great Milton's far-resounding word
Had thousands fallen faint of hope deferred :
But for his patience, I of low estate
Had cursed my life this day and scorned to wait.

PENIEL.

O WRESTLING angel of the long night
hours,
Unbidden comest to a lonely place,
At thy dread grasp an awful fear devours
My soul, yet will I not entreat for grace.
Still struggling with thee till the break of day,
Hurt in my sinew, spent with weariness,
Remembering Jacob, I am strong to say
“I will not let thee go except thou bless!”
So shalt thou bless me, and I shall prevail.
I may not make thee tell me who thou art,
Strange spirit, fleeing at the dawnlight pale,
And I am grievous hurt; yet in my heart
I know that God hath met me in this place,
And that I here have seen Him face to face.

THE WORTH OF SPEECH.

HAST thou a word to give thy brother man ?
Hold it not back, for bitter is his need,
No less of noble end than kindly deed
To help him onward in his journey's span.
The faintest breath may into action fan
A slumbering impulse. Little boots thy creed
Or thine own doubt, if thou hast fuel to feed
The fire low-burning in some soul. Who can,
Is bound to speak. Good deeds must minister
To this poor body with its store of ills,
But one white word with sudden glory fills
The inmost heart, and doth such boon confer
That evermore the life is blessed thereby,
And comes more nearly to the true and high.

WHO have not been in bondage do not know
 The length and height and breadth of
 liberty ;
 The captive hath its measure ; only he
 Conceives how free the winds of heaven blow.
 They value health who most have felt pain's
 throe,
 And weakness best appraises hardihood.
 Of want alone is plenty understood,
 And friends unto the friendless fairest show.
 O frail humanity, that still must learn
 By losing, and must comprehend through pain,
 This is the mystery of life, to yearn,
 To lose, and out of losses to make gain.
 The spirit grows by that which takes away,
 And wisdom maketh rich the impoverished day.

TO ONE OF FULL YEARS WHO DIED
IN HER SLEEP.

AS peacefully as a perfected flower
Doth drop its petals in the quiet night,
Her spirit in the dark hath taken flight
At the swift summons of the silent power.
So easily hath she attained that hour
That others gain but after bitter fight
And weariness and faintings and affright
And lonely vigils in death's prison tower.
Ah, were but death so pitiful to all,
And we could die as we lie down to sleep,
With one familiar prayer that we repeat,
To bid the dear Lord take our souls and keep,
Then death were but a kindness to befall
Some night at end of life, when rest is sweet !

TO ONE WHOSE FATHER DIED
BEFORE HER BIRTH.

IS this the sorrow writ within thine eyes,
Thy mother's woe while yet thou wast un-
born,
So that from birth thou wast already wise
In the great griefs that leave the heart forlorn?
A child of grief indeed thou seem'st to me;
Thy brow doth wear the trouble of past years,
Remembered not, yet ever borne by thee,
Whose eyes are heavy with thy mother's tears.
Couldst thou, remembering, grieving, mourn for
him
As we our fathers mourn in tenderness,
Thy face were not so filled with longing dim,
The yearning of a child born fatherless.
Strange mystery — that thou shouldst meet with
death
In life's dark chamber, ere thou drewest breath!

INFANCY.

I.

THE dawn is ever lovelier than the day ;
The early morning murmurs of the wind
Forbode a beauty that we fail to find
Along the noontide turnings of our way.
The tender opening of a poet's lay
Hath hint of something that we later miss ;
And we a gentle grievance make of this,
That nothing purer can musician play
Beyond the prelude. O thou little child,
My love, my unblown rose, that robbed the dawn
Of sweetness, and from out the morning smiled,
My heart is with a sadness overborne,
That from thy dewy forehead Time will steal
Each trace of freshness as thy days unseal !

II.

And yet, thou sweet of heart, do I not yearn
 To see thy life its petals fair unfold,
 To learn what each to-morrow hath in hold,
 And what each night will bring thee in its turn ?
 Though none there be so sorrowful and stern
 As silent Time, yet would I bar his way,
 And have him leave thee ever as to-day
 On the wide world's breast, thou tiny uncurled
 fern ?

Ah, little one, I know not what I would,
 Nor why I grieve who am so wholly glad,
 Save that my heart is burdened for thy good,
 And for its very joy of thee is sad.
 My hidden hopes are interblent with fears,
 And all my mother-love wells up in tears.

ON THE BUST OF A CHILD.

(BY SERGEANT KENDALL.)

I.

SO hath the sculptor modelled her pure face,
That all its pathos captured is in clay,
And I, who know her not, could weep to-day
For love of childhood and a dear child's grace ;
Could weep and yet be glad in one sweet space
Before her loveliness. Her cheeks, they say,
Are like the wild rose petals blown in May,
And like pale violets born in some shy place
Are her wide eyes. I heed not, as I trace
Each perfect line of lip and cheek and chin,
And, dreaming that the soul is there within,
Yearn but to take the tender little face
In my two hands, and so to bend me low
To that sweet mouth, and half-uplifted brow !

II.

They tell me, gazing, that to her the door
Of sound is shut ; that she will never wake
To voice of wind or utterance of lake
Or speech of friends : then I, who had wept o'er
Her simple loveliness, am grieved the more
With sorrowful sweet pity for her sake,
And in the lines the little taught lips take
Read a new secret pathos missed before.
Yet is she strangely happy, hearing not ;
Like an exquisite shell beside the shore
That has no knowledge of the breaker's roar,
But holds the heart of ocean unforget ;
That through all tumult and all wild unease
Hears but the sound of stillness in deep seas.

I HOLD my darling close against my heart,
I press my lips upon his golden head,
I feel his breathing and each childish start,
Whereby my love is strangely comforted.
He slumbers sound upon my circling arm,
Nor dreams that I must lie awake for joy,
That I may thus encompass him from harm,
This sweet night long, my golden-hearted boy.
Ah, could I ever have him near to me,
Protect my darling always, night and day,
How then my heart would ever richer be,
How then my life would stretch a shining way !
But I must dream again in loneliness
Of these sweet lips that I so fondly press.

MY sister's child, and almost child of mine,
Is mother-love a greater love than this?
Could mother-love more wistfully resign
Its precious burden and its weight of bliss?
My heart is heavy with the love of thee,
My eyes I lift not lest they overflow;
Now have they come to take thee far from me,
O heart, my heart, how can I let thee go?
I have no help, for thou art not my own,
I have all pain, so much my own thou art;
I must go forward childless and alone,
And hide from men the hurt within my heart.
My steps are ready and my eyes are set,
Good-bye, my child,—O love, my love, not
yet!

LET me not mourn the sweet forgotten kiss
Who still may guide my darling on his
way ;

Let me not grieve for that departed day,
Nor overmuch the childish fondlings miss ;
Shall I not learn a new and higher bliss
As he and I the unfolding laws obey ?
Let other loves supplant me as they may
Still shall I be forever sure of this :
To these new loves my love hath moulded him ;
E'en though I die, and fade into the dim
Faint region of his past, yet shall I be
Forever part of his sweet destiny !
This single deed of loving have I wrought,
That of my love his tenderness was taught.

HER face I hold a vision in my heart,
Bright, lovely, and unfading, safe from
change ;
Time cannot harm it, hidden there apart,
Nor seasons write upon it as a scroll,
Nor sorrow grave it. Nothing sad or strange
Can come unto it, marring one fair line
Of the old loveliness. Radiant it doth shine
Like a perpetual sunlight in my soul.
Undimmed the goddess-glory, youth like gold,
The clear-eyed gaze, and smile so human-sweet,
The face like morning that I ran to meet,
That was my light of living through child years,
And lit the way of life as I grew old.
Though sorrow blind my eyes with bitter tears,
And all men's faces are a mist to me,
Her face of joy forever I behold,
With clearest sight I shall forever see.

IF thought some swifter travel could but find
Than this laborious slow written speech,
If scientists some braver way could teach
By which we might indeed outstrip the wind,
Then I to thee my musings could unbind,
And we two could be talking each to each,
And every quiet thought of mine would reach
Across a continent to touch thy mind.
Across bare ether do the currents sweep
That yesterday were shackled. Who shall say
They shall not go untrammelled through the
 deep
Ere sets to-morrow's sun, or that some day
The unknown forces in the mind that keep
Shall not compel all barriers to give way?

TO R. IN SAN FRANCISCO.

AS one doth vainly struggle to recall
The clear elusive note of some wild bird,
And longs again to have the pure notes fall
That he alas ! too transiently has heard,
So do I seek thy presence to restore,
That wove about my heart so swift a spell,
And long to feel thy nameless charm once
 more,
Dear stranger, loved so suddenly and well !
As he within the forest hearkens long
For that one bird to sing its sweet way back,
And goes disconsolate till that one song
Again outbreaks to fill his spirit's lack, —
So I, reluctant, go upon my way,
And for our next sweet meeting dumbly pray.

BE thou my friend, dear friend, for friend
thou art

And shalt be whether thou wilt be or no ;
Thou canst not shut thyself from out my heart,
Not take away the knowledge that I know.
Forever thou art lovely to my love,
Nor with thy graces canst thou unacquaint
A heart that hath acquaintanceship above
All portraits of thee that thy friends could
paint.

So truly in my love thou art portrayed
That I do count thee altogether mine,
And of the future am so unafraid
That I will ask of thee no word or sign.
I need no pledge of friendship's surety
Who am so sure of friendship and of thee.

SOLITUDE.

I.

I LOVE my friends, yet love I solitude,
And love to go alone beneath the sky,
Unhindered as the winds that wander by,
And irresponsible : now in the wood,
Now in the field to linger, at my mood,
And now upon some grassy slope to lie
Too undisturbed to care to question why
One spot above another should seem good ;
To choose my way without a thought of choice,
As rivers are unconscious where they wind,
And clouds all day will drift contentedly ;
To let my misty thoughts blow loose and free,
Untroubled by the sound of my own voice
Or by the leading of another's mind.

II.

Or like some little creature in the wood,
That follows busily a single quest,
Some burning purpose in his little breast,
Unquestioned, unmolested, unpursued,
So do I love in hours of solitude
To follow hard my fancy east or west,
The secret of my going unconfessed,
A hidden purpose working in the blood.
I find it strangely pleasant to be dumb,
To harbor secrets that are all my own,
And keep my motives to myself alone ;
To learn how life and industry are sweet
To little animals ; to go and come
As they do, with mute lips and busy feet.

RECOGNITION.

OUR eyes are holden that we may not see.
With hearts that burn within us do we
 stray

Along some old familiar grass-grown way,
And reach our hands to some outspreading tree
That waits us by the roadside, brotherly.
We wander down the fields as children may,
And loiter with the loitering summer day,
But miss the recognition. Blind are we.
Only, sometimes there falls a healing touch
On our dull lids, and for a moment's space
The look of this old earth we love so much
And grieve so much with our distrust and doubt,
Is like the look of some long-absent face
Whose sudden nearness makes the heart cry out !

Miscellaneous Poems and
Fragments.

A DREAM.

I DREAMED a fair and fragile dream :
A maid in amethyst
Sat where the tinted light did stream
As through a jewelled mist.

In fashion strange the dream did come, —
In Cædmon it was writ ;
I seemed to read the ancient tome,
Yet saw the maiden sit

Where falling lights and shadows met,
And heard her tell her tale
To jewels in the mullions set,
That flashed and then grew pale.

“ My mother made a vow, and so
Her child must be a nun.
I must unto the convent go
When my trousseau is done.”

I turned a page and saw with her
Rich robes of shining blue,
And all the garments sprinkled were
With rosemary and rue.

I sought again the maiden's face ;
She made no plaint or moan,
But did her simple words retrace
In a sweet undertone.

“ Unto the convent I must go
When my trousseau is done,
My mother made a vow, and so
Her child must be a nun.”

So piteous she leaned her head
Against the casement there,
I made to close the book I read
That I might smooth her hair.

The dream did fade like morning mist,
Yet does my heart see now
That figure elad in amethyst,
That pure and patient brow !

MY LADY'S EYES.

MY lady's eyes are limpid springs,
More pure than any mountain lake ;
Thereto mine own do come to drink,
But unto love such fever clings
That I my thirst can never slake
At their sweet brink !

INDOLENCE.

SO many things there are to do,
So many books to read!
Ah, true, but tell me, you,
Where is the need,
When 't is so perfect just to lie
Deep down within the unmown grass,
And watch the fleecy clouds that pass
Like sheep across the open sky,
And to one's quiet heart repeat
A few sweet phrases o'er and o'er,
That one has gleaned some other day
From out of Shakespeare's harvest-store.
Or even to let go
The poets, and to know
No wisdom but the love
Of this wise mother earth ;
To be instructed in the way
The wind will take the grasses, and to see
How little insects travel warily,
And learn the patience of all creeping things ;
To trace the flight of envied wings,

And catch the bird-notes falling clear
As sudden raindrops, and to hear
How breezes in the tree-tops meet.
Instructed so,
The spirit's life is made more sweet
And knowledge hath its second birth.

INDIAN NAMES.

THEY have left their names behind them,
 adding rich barbaric grace
To the mountain, to the river, to the fertile
 meadow-place,
Relics of the ancient redmen, of the sad and
 vanished race.

We are glad beside their waters, we are strong
 upon their hills,
Their old poetry upon us, like a glamour falls,
 and fills
All the hollows of the mountains, and the chan-
 nels of the rills.

IN AUTUMN.

THESE golden days of fall to me
Are like a mint, a treasury
Of priceless memories, hoarded deep
Within my heart, where visions keep.

Each falling leaf, each golden beam,
Doth touch and loose some olden dream,
Till I stand deep in memories
Like leaves thick strewn beneath the trees.

Down aisles like these, in early days,
I walked the bright autumnal ways ;
Through drifts like these I thrust my feet,
A child upon a golden street.

O golden days, so sad, so sweet,
How doth my heart itself repeat,
As I look back the stretch of years,
And count the autumns through my tears.

BITTER-SWEET.

APRIL rains are falling fierce
As some bleak November gale,
Whistling winds that sting and pierce ;
Gusts of snow and sudden hail,
Hurling white upon the hill,
Strike the sweet spring stark and chill ;
But within, upon the fire,
I am building funeral pyre,
While I warm me in the heat
Of my burning bitter-sweet.

April lies forgot in storm,
April's buds are beaten back,
While November's ancient form
Towers ghostlike on her track,
And the wraith of the old year
Bars her from her blossomed cheer.
Hoarsely beat the wind and rain,
And the tossing boughs without
Scratch upon the window-pane,
Like a plaintive thing shut out ;

But within, I twine the fire
With the wild vine, high and higher,
While I warm me in the heat
Of my burning bitter-sweet !

THE PINES.

THE pine trees sing dim lullabies,
 And sweet watch keep
Over the new-born snow,
 That lies asleep.

WINTER WOODS.

THERE is a solitude in winter woods
No stranger knows ;
A peace for unused heart too deep
In forest snows.
With reverence on the threshold wait
Till Nature thee initiate.

WINTER TWILIGHT.

THE twilight follows hard the day,
It slips along the village street
And leaves a silent, shadowed way,
Where figures dim and fancies meet.

ON THE MOUNTAIN.

O LIGHT upon the mountain,
Thy airy streamers fall
As clear and spirit-piercing
As silver bugle-call !

O storm-cloud on the mountain
Thy shadow passes by
Like trumpetings of battle
Beneath an angry sky !

THE BREAKING STORM.

O PASSIONATE, storm-burdened sky,
With windy wastes of water under !
I see the rain-clouds sweeping by
And hear them rolling up the thunder,

And feel a wild tempestuous glee
Go coursing through my soul's commotion,
To see the elements set free
Upon the stretches of the ocean !

AFTER THE SUMMER RAIN.

AFTER the summer rain
The air is sweet with the scent of
flowers
Crushed by the beat of the silver showers,
And the birds come out of their leafy
bowers
And sing as if it were spring again,
After the summer rain.

DAWN.

THE fair gray dove of the earliest dawn
Lay brooding in the east.
The winds of the day were yet unborn,
The winds of the night had ceased.

More fair than the flush at the mountains' rim
Was that grayness soft and shy ;
More pure than the sweet birds' morning hymn
That silence trembled by,

Till the rosy gold of the morn out-broke,
And the dawn took wing away,
And the world o' the weary turned and woke
To the light of the lusty day.

MORNING SONG.

MY curtain is pencilled with shadows of
leaves

And little birds fluttering down from the eaves,
Glad in the morning sun ;

Shadows that wave and tangle and twine

With every sweet wind that stirs in the vine,

Shadows that fly and are gone !

Oh, old-fashioned window with tiny set panes,

Oh, drooping wistaria drenched in night-rains,

With diamond drops still a-shake,

What hath a palace with this to compare,

My own morning glimpse of vine and fresh air,

My own little room where I wake ?

THE "HESSIAN HOUSE
NEWPORT.

IF I could but rebuild in rhyme
The slow-wrought loveliness of time,
This ancient house should ever stand
To grace and beautify the land ;
Its beaten front still face the sea,
And still the vines luxuriantly
Enwrap the mouldering walls and eaves
With deeply massed wistaria leaves,
And still should waving shadows blow
Across the vine-set casements so !

THE " HESSIAN HOUSE,"
NEWPORT.

MARIPOSA LILIES.

WE saw them on the side of dark Cheyenne,
Pale-gleaming in the moonlight as we
rode,

For night had closed around us once again
And laid its beauty on us like a load.
Before us stretched the prairies as the sea,
The mountains and the moon rose up behind,
And strangeness was afloat upon the wind.
A murmur of things past and things to be,
Their startling loveliness besought us there
Like some sweet thought that cometh unaware,
Their pale cups lifted to the heavens wide,
So slender-stemmed upon the mountain side !

WIND IN THE TREES.

WAKE, wake, wind in the trees !
Songs of the mainland, songs of the seas,
Whispers of heaven, moanings of earth,
Anguish at dying, travail at birth,
Rapture of loving, joy in the light,
Grief and betrayal, fear of the night,
Loneliness, madness, glory, and pain,
Yearning, fulfilment, and yearning again ; —
These are thy songs, and stranger than these.
Wake, wake, wind in the trees !

THE BELL-BUOY.

O HARK ! O hark !

A voice goes swinging through the dark
To bid the mariner beware — beware — beware !
The night is black, and ominous the air,
And fears upon my heart press heavily,
For many be the sailors out at sea,
And many mothers kneel this night in prayer.
Ah God ! and there are shipwrecks everywhere
While borne along the north-wind's moan
I hear that ceaseless monotone
Its iterated warning bear.

O hark ! O hark !

O mariner, beware — beware — beware !
The wave-tossed echoes, dim and gaunt,
Like spectral shadows clutch at me,
As if some burdened soul did haunt
Those shoals along the outer dark,
And expiate eternally
Some distant wrong, by hovering there
To bid the mariner beware — beware — beware !

THE SILENT VISITORS.

THE fairest things are those that silent
come :

Ye may not hear the footfall of the flowers,
Nor the descending of the nightly dew,
Nor by the sound of dropping may ye know
When come the flakes of the down-falling snow ;
The ear may not detect one shadow pass
Across the quiet, unforeboding grass,
Nor any fleecy cloud across the blue ;
The sweet approaching of the morning hours
Ye may not listen for, nor may ye hark
To hear the mystic closing-in of dark ;
The little stars are silent up above ;
There is no sudden sound upon the sea
When breaks the moonlight on it silverly.
Ah, so the poem to the poet's brain
Steals silently as doth the thought of home.
And hearts may listen and may vainly strain
But cannot hear the coming-in of love !

QUEST.

THERE is a mantle cast upon the hills,
There is a strange suffusion of the air,
My soul is filled with vague and nameless thrills,
And I am urged to go, I know not where.

Whence are these longings set within my feet ?
Whence are these eager quickenings of the
heart ?

Whence is this sense of life, so new and sweet ?
Ah, let me hasten, ere the glow depart !

CALL.

THE rainbow draws me and the purple hills,
I needs must go, I know not whereunto,
The river leads me, and the little rills,
I follow on — what matter whereunto ?

The ocean claims me, and the ceaseless tides
Call up unto my soul forevermore,
The tempest, also, and the storm that rides,
These summon me forever, — evermore !

THE CLUE.

I FOLLOWED it through wooded dell
And by the river's gleam,
I sought it in the pink-lined bell
That swings beside the stream.

I felt it tremble on the air
Before the winds of dawn,
And touched it, but to lose it there,
As it was onward borne.

I heard it fall a silver note
Upon a twilight sea,
From out the vesper sparrow's throat,
To vanish utterly.

I dreamed I had it of the star
That guides upon the deep,
But when I waked it still was far
Within the bournes of sleep !

THE END OF THE RAINBOW

AH, just to yonder purple hill,
Where rainbow and horizon meet,
We hurry on and hurry still,
With swift impatient childish feet,
To find the fabled pot of gold.
So tired soon — we did not know
The way would be so far to go
Before the pretty thing were gained ;
Yet struggle on, all travel-stained,
Like little children over-bold,
And wonder that the hills retreat
Where rainbow and horizon meet !

LIFE was real in childhood days,
Life was true and things were so,
But now I know not what I know,
There is a mist athwart my ways.

There is a film across my brain,
I reach my hand and grasp but shade.
The days of shadow stuff are made,
Of mocking joys and dreams of pain.

O SPENDTHRIFT years, when without
ruth

We squandered all the gold of youth,
And cast our coin to wind and rain ;
In our impoverishment how we
Look back upon that liberty,
And cry for one young hour again !

O WEARY are the watches of the night,
Before the morning dawneth still and
white,
And bitter are the thoughts that toss and start
Within the haunted chambers of the heart.

BRUISED in spirit, sore at heart,
To the healing woods I fled,
Found one little forest flower,
Sent me early, for that hour ;
And I straight was comforted.

SAVANNAH.

THE price of wisdom is the thing most dear
in life,
And Odin bought it with his plucked-out eye,
And drank there of the well by the Ygdrasil-
tree.

Thou, . . . , art my price — most precious ever
paid.

Why must I this, who cared not to be wise?
I would forever thirst, might I but still have
thee!

I MISSED the cherished thing I sought,
And gained a thing that others miss,
Who do but envy me for this,
Nor know how dearly it was bought.

TO H. B. J.

TO leave done all that I can
Of kindness and beautiful thought,
With love fill life's little span, —
This will I seek, as she sought.

Sought she? Nay, as the flower
Springeth nor dreameth of death,
So she unfolded in power;
Love was her life and her breath.

Child poems and Songs.

LITTLE-FOLK LAND.

THE children all go looking
In vain for Fairyland,
Where little folk have dwelling,
And wander hand in hand ;
Where silvery small voices
Ring clear upon the air,
Where magic little whispers
Work wonders everywhere ;
Where flower fields are forests,
For tiny feet to thread,
Where one has lived a lifetime
Before the day is fled.
For this dear wondrous country
The children look in vain ;
They find but empty flowers,
Through sun and summer rain.
It is the grown folks only
Have eyes for Fairyland,
Where little people wander,
And toddle hand in hand ;

Where gleeful voices prattle,
And whisper secrets strange ;
Where tiny sprites by magic
To bigger fairies change ;
Where dancing little figures
Get lost amid the flowers ;
Where days as years are measured,
And minutes count for hours :
It is the grown folks only
Can find the land of elves ;
How could the children guess it ?
The fairies are themselves.

TO H. J.

WERE you a little Dutch girl
You'd be, perhaps, as sweet,
As now you are, my hoyden,
And very much more neat !

You'd be a little housewife,
And even at your play
You'd take your knitting needles,
And knit and knit away !

You'd never be forgetting
To feed your pussy-cat,
And she, like Holland pussies,
Would grow so sleek and fat.

But were you, dear, a Gretchen,
You'd live across the sea,
And so would be, my dearie,
No kind of use to me.

TO E. K.

WITH A PHOTOGRAPH.

SO that you may remember, little maid,
And keep my name until you come again,
And look up laughing at me, unafraid,
And let me kiss you as I kissed you when
We played together in the maple shade, —

I send you here this other little maid,
Who likewise loved the blossoms and the trees,
And all the sounds that filled the summer air;
Who held her baby face against the breeze,
And laughed to feel it playing in her hair.

Last summer, little maid, was long ago,
But I have not forgotten, nor have you,
The marigolds that sleep beneath the snow;
I pray you, little friend, remember too
The one that loved you in that long ago.

A PLEA.

O LITTLE maidens of to-day,
Like little, dear, old-fashioned girls,
You part your hair and brush your curls,
Smooth off the brow
And wonder how
The pity ever came to pass
That every little lad and lass
Some years ago — as pictures show —
Did cut their hair and let it drop
To cover their sweet foreheads up.
To-morrow's little maidens, pray,
Will ye not also please to wear
The pretty bands of parted hair,
And leave your little foreheads bare?

TO ELIZABETH.

SWEET and warm is the summer's breath,
Warm and wide is the summer's sea,
But the heart of the summer I find in thee,
Barefoot baby, Elizabeth !

Little brown legs and dimpled feet,
Little brown dimpled arms and hands,
Child of the sun, child of the sands.
What hath the summer so sweet, so sweet !

Little brown face where merriment plays,
Soft blown hair in a golden mist,
Sweet little lips so newly kissed,
Dear little voice and darling ways.

Great dark eyes where baby thoughts lie,
Shy and shadowy, dim and deep,
Where wonderful visions slumber and sleep,
And fleet little fancies go dreamily by.

All that babyhood means, thou art ;
More than summer can give, thou hast ;
Love lies hid in thy tiny past
And thy unrolled future, dear little heart !

Little daughter of artists, thou,
Art part of beauty's unwaking dream,
Art touched with the wandering light, the gleam,
That strays over earth, we know not how.

The light that beckons the artist on,
And haunts the poet with wordless grace,
Has fallen fair on thy baby face,
Divinely lingers, and is not gone.

LIKE a piece of thistle-down
That floats across the grass
Was blown into my garden-bed
The dearest little lass !

She lit among the lily-blooms
And lingered there a space,
And every little blossom reached
To kiss her baby face.

MY flowers bloom more sweet for me to-day
Because a little maid once passed their
way
And flung about them in the summer air
The spell of baby looks and blowing hair.

LOIS.

WHEN the gentle maiden Lois
Sings her twilight songs,
Wistful thoughts and fanciful
Come to me in throngs.

Lois's eyes are full of dreams,
Dreamy is her voice ;
Sweet the dear, old-fashioned songs
Sung to me by Lois !

TO E. B. D.

HO, little boy, how I long to be
 Back in my chosen place,
With a book of songs and thoughts of the sea
And you, little boy, in the nook with me,
 Sharing the morning's grace !

High, high in our perilous seat
 Over the precipice-brow,
Sky overhead and sea at our feet,
On the sheer gray rocks where the salt winds
 meet
 Would that we both were now !

Snug, snug in our sun-warmed nest,
 Would we again could lie,
And watch the birds on the ocean's breast,
And sing the songs that we love the best,
 You, little boy, and I !

We would sing old songs and make us new,
 There on the lichened rock ;
And this is the song I would make for you,
Watching the boats in the harbor blue,
 And the distant white-winged flock :

*Out afloat in a bonny boat,
With glad sail spread to the breeze,
Oh, to go where the white wings show
Far on the blue, blue seas!*

*Tossing along with a shout and song,
And a snatch of a sailor's stave,
Blithe and free as the sunbeam sea,
Or the bird that rocks on the wave.*

*Oh, to sail in the windy gale
Where the wild sea-horses plunge,
Where the white storm drives, and the bent
sail strives
On with its lift and lunge!*

*Oh, to be on a changèd sea,
When the shifting squall-winds scud,
To feel 'mid the strain of wind and rain
The leaping of sailor's blood!*

*For bravest far of the hearts that are
Is the heart of the man at sea,
And the ocean life of windy strife
Is the life for you and me.*

There we would sit through the high blue noon,
 Dreaming of ships and spars,
Making a song for the winds to croon :
“Oh, to sail under sun and moon
 And under the lonely stars !”

“ LULLABY-LAND.”

WHERE is the road to Lullaby-land?
Where is the ferry to Dreamland-shore?
Here, little wanderer, take my hand,
Mother will show thee to Lullaby-land,
Mother will ferry her darling o'er
The sweet rocking waters to Dreamland-shore.

Soft lie the shadows in Lullaby-land,
Soft lap the waters by Dreamland-shore,
Sweet is the sound on that far-away strand
Of little keels grating along the sand,
And tenderly stealeth the moonlight o'er
The dear little children on Dreamland-shore.

Here, little weary one, take my hand,
Soon shall my dearie be far afloat ;
Mother's lap is Lullaby-land,
Mother's arms are the empty boat,
Waiting to carry her darling o'er
The sweet rocking waters to Dreamland-shore.

LULLABY.

OUT beneath the summer sky,
We will weave a lullaby,
By-low, baby, lullaby.

Little breezes of the air,
Stoop to kiss my baby's hair,
Grasses tall and bending bough
Stoop to guard my baby's brow,
Mother birds are hiding high,
Gentle shadows wander by,
Where the quiet hollows lie
Sleeping to my lullaby,
By-low, baby, lullaby.

Meadow murmurs steal along
In a misty slumber song,
Little blossoms whisper low,
Tossing incense to and fro,
Tender echoes wake and die,
Little thoughts go blowing by,
Little dreams go floating high,
While I weave my lullaby,
By-low, baby, lullaby!

“THE END OF THE DAY.”

(TO THE PAINTING BY SERGEANT KENDALL.)

THE tender lights grow quiet in the sky,
The plays of little children all are done,
The starlight will come creeping by and by,
While thou and I take comfort, little one.

The day hath heavy been and full of care,
My heart hath wearied, eager for the night,
But I am healèd as I kiss thy hair
And fold thee to me in the fading light.

Thy slumberous dark eyes are wide with dreams ;
Where hast thou fared, my baby, at thy play,
From what far wonderlands and tinkling streams
Comest thou to me at the end of day ?

Drop book and play ; bring now thy fancies
home,
Bring home to mother all the little flock,
To-morrow they shall go again to roam
Abroad remembered fields by fern and rock.

To-morrow thou shalt prattle sweet again
And run about thy free, unconscious ways,
A little sunbeam fallen among men
And gladdening, whichever way it strays.

But now, but now, the hour is all my own ;
'T is mine to hold thy weary little frame,
To press thee close, who art so quiet grown,
And murmur by-lows of my baby's name.

The little stars come creeping in the sky,
The plays of little children all are done,
And thou must off to sleeps in by and by ;
Too brief the day's end, oh, my little one !

THERE are gardens, gardens, over all the
land,
Planted, nourished, tended by a loving Hand.
Sweetest of those gardens is the one I know,
Where the sunny prairies look to peaks of snow.
Morning draws not to me, and the night comes
not,
But my thoughts go turning to that sweetest
spot,
And my heart makes pleading: " ' Christ the
Gardener ' keep
All those precious blossoms — and the one
asleep."

THE LITTLE NEW MOON.

I SPIED one noon
A little new moon
Like a cobweb floating up high ;
But by and by,
When the day grew old,
It turned to gold
And floated down out of the sky.

MOON SONG.

THERE'S a throne in the east and a throne
in the west,
And the royal heavens lie between.
For the golden sun is a sceptred king,
And the moon is his crownèd queen.

A lonely queen is the silver moon,
Though the dimpling stars her maidens are ;
She passes among them silently
As she follows her lord afar.

DO you know
That you can go
In the early morning light
When the dew is on the grass
And find the little cobweb tents
The fairies sleep in all the night?
But, alas, you'll find no traces
Of their little fairy faces!

IF I were a little pink shell by the sea
How happy and cool and contented I'd be !
In the pretty white sand I would nestle and
 lie
And play with the frolicsome waves going by ;
They would whisper me secrets of things in the
 deep,
And forever those secrets I'd treasure and
 keep.

PEE - WEE.

NAY, little pee-wee, be not sad ;
Why art thou plaintive upon the bough ?
Summer is here and skies are glad
And only I am sorrowful ; thou —

What hast thou had to do with grief,
What is the ache in thy tiny breast,
That there thou mournest within the leaf,
Sad at the door of thy own sweet nest ?

Poor little pee-wee, art thou too
Hurt with the weight of the sad world's woe,
Pained with pity beneath the blue
For the strange earth sorrows thou dost not
know ?

I may not fathom thy soft lament,
Nor search the pain in thy pure-drawn note,
But my own dim trouble with thine is blent,
And utters itself from thy sweet throat.

MY NEIGHBOR'S LINDEN.

CITY yards are n't big enough
To hold a spreading tree,
And so my neighbor's Linden
Gives shade enough for me.

Its branches touch my windows,
It cools my house with green,
It casts me waving shadows
With sunlight flashed between.

Some can follow summer
Through woods and over lea,
'T is sweet to me to find her
Beneath my neighbor's tree.

PUSSY-WILLOWS.

PUSSY-WILLOWS shyly peeping,
Gaining courage, slyly creeping,
From their little coats looked out
To find what Nature was about.

Pussy-willows, getting bolder,
Growing strong as they grew older,
Threw their old black coats away,
Showed soft, fuzzy robes of gray.

Pussy-willows, nodding brightly
As the breezes brushed them lightly,
Played at hide-and-seek all day
With the sunbeams warm and gay.

Pussy-willows, cloudy hours,
Revelled in the April showers,
Listened to the robins' call,
Watched the sunshine sift and fall.

Pussy-willows, gold-dust laden,
Caught the eye of passing maiden ;
Ah, did April weep that day
For her booty borne away ?

PARTRIDGE-VINE.

THERE dwells within the forest,
Upon the lowly ground,
As dear a little creeper
As ye have ever found.

It shelters early blossoms,
As delicate and fair,
As arbutus, sweet neighbor,
That likewise nesteth there.

When others go in hiding,
This sturdy little vine
Makes brave with scarlet berries,
And winters with the pine.

O trusty little comrade
Of humble and of great,
What cheeriness and courage
Adorn thy low estate !

JASMINE.

JASMINE tangles in the wildwood,
Jasmine glimpsing in the sun,
Careless as the joy of childhood,
Sweet as dreams of love begun.

Vines of jasmine, creeping, clinging,
Climbing here and drooping there;
Bells of jasmine — swaying, swinging,
Spilling fragrance on the air.

Careless as the joy of childhood,
Sweet as dreams of love begun,
Jasmine tangles in the wildwood,
Jasmine blossoms in the sun.

WILD ROSE.

A KING might sue thee, peasant flower,
To grace his palace gardens rare,
But thou would'st rue thee, every hour,
Should he thy beauty captive bear.

It is to thee a fairer boon
More lowly ways than his to bless ;
Along the free wild roads of June
To loiter in thy loveliness !

CLOVER.

AH but clover, common clover,
Growing as it used to grow
When the buttercups beside me
Were as tall as I, you know !

When I roamed from morn till sundown,
Child upon the summer-side,
Brushed my way among the grasses,
Met the daisies level-eyed —

Nothing was there quite like clover,
Nothing is there that to-day
Makes my heart so beat with gladness
In the blithe old careless way.

Simple ecstacy of being,
Simple pleasure in the sun,
Clover, I have not forgotten,
Nor with childhood have I done !

**“The Place of My Desire”
and other Poems.**

THE PLACE OF MY DESIRE.

HERE have I found the place of my desire ;
Here life does seem a gentle pastoral,
Where simple things in loveliness conspire,
And peace and quietness from Heaven fall
Like morning light. Here is no great or small,
But all things minister to my content,
And I am happy just to hear the call,
“ Co’boss, co’boss,” along the pasture sent,
With its own faint prolonging echoes borne and
blent.

Here little cottages are nestled low
In comfortable valley-lands. Behind,
The bending sky down-stoops to kiss the brow
Of sunlit uplands. Ah, and were I blind
Still I some share of friendliness would find,
Still would I know that by each cottage door
A darling brook light-heartedly did wind
To the great sea, that murmurs from the shore
And with its unspent yearning calls forevermore!

Here am I moved of many things to tell
That fill the quietness of my own heart ;
Of ferns and mosses growing down a well
All dripping cool ; of little roads apart
From beaten ways, where timid shadows start,
With hint of sweet seclusion just beyond ;
Of tiny creatures that so softly dart
They scarcely shake the dew from leaf or frond ;
Of silence brooding over an unrippled pond ;

Of cattle grazing on the quiet fields
In peaceful groups, through undisturbèd days ;
Of harvest-lands rich-laden with their yields,
And russet fallows wrapped in autumn haze ;
Of corn-shock rustling in each wind that strays ;
Of little homes, that have no fear of harm ;
Of lowly folk, that follow lowly ways
And make each dear companionable farm
A hearth-side centre of security and calm.

And of the sea — the solitary sea,
That beats with its old burden up the shore,
And then falls back again, half wearily,
As if its uttermost could do no more, —
The sea, the mighty, that on its deep floor
So tenderly doth guard the frailest shell
And brings it up from that abounding store

Of unspoiled wealth so cautiously and well
It lies unbroken on the beach, with the dim
spell

Of the unseen upon it, and the sound
Of ocean whisperings within it still.
Oft have I put my ear unto the ground
To catch the prisoned murmur that doth fill
My soul with a vague wistfulness, until
The strangeness of it grows a very pain.
But this — this fragile shell — was born to thrill
To the great ocean's heart and still is fain
To whisper wonders of the deeps where it has
lain.

.

Here have I found the place of my desire ;
Here life is lovely as an antique lay,
And kindles in my breast the sacred fire
Of poesy, till even I, to-day,
The muse's sweet behest must needs obey,
And in old linkèd metre try to trace
Some loveliness — to catch, if so I may,
The over-welling beauty of this place,
And in a brimming measure hold it for a space.

PARADISE ROAD,
NEWPORT.

SUNSET AT WINNEPESAUKEE.

I.

LAKE of pure waters, met with quiet sky
Amid the sunset hills of amethyst,
Ye speak in silences, as lovers list,
And each new stillness passes like a sigh
That for some unnamed grief doth wake and die,
Or for some dreamed-of joy that hath been
missed.

What untraced sadness is there in this tryst,
Or am I sad that soon will darkness lie
Upon the trysting-spot? Most gentle night,
Steal tenderly to this dear lake, nor yet
Disturb the soft caresses of the light.
Still tarry down the east, and longer let
The shadows play athwart the hills, that now
Grow slumberous; and night-wind, loiter thou!

II.

O Lake of opal, set with opal sky
Within encircling hills of amethyst,
The tints upon thee mingle as they list,
And each new blending is so fair that I
Could weep with wondering as it goes by.
A fire-opal that the sun hath kissed,
Thy colors gleam as through a sudden mist
Of wistful unshed tears that quivering lie!
Such beauty hauntingly doth fill the heart,
As doth remembered gladness fill the night;
And as a lover evermore doth bear
The image of one face most gentle fair,
So shall I carry thy bewildering light
Through unillumined ways and crowded mart.

III.

I think upon the old Ægean sea
Such colors lay, when to the lonely sight
Of one outlooking far from Patmos' height,
There fell a vision of the things to be,
And he beheld a city daringly,
Of gold like glass, with rivers running white,
And jasper walls upbuilt on chrysolite
And jacinth, topaz, and chalcedony.
Ah, did not John behold with westward eyes
The laying of those pure foundation stones
Along the evening's ramparts, one by one ;
And as he watched the jasper walls arise,
See suddenly the four-and-twenty thrones
Within a city needing not the sun ?

THE brave west winds come sweeping down
the Broads,
The silver lights across the waters run,
And glance and burn like gleaming-bladed
swords
Outflashing from their scabbards in the sun.
Great purple shadows pass athwart the hills
And out into the open, swift away !
Old prophecies awake, and strange wild thrills
Do course within the bosom of the day.
Oh, for the speed of some white-wingèd boat,
That I might sail thy silver waters o'er,
And chase wind-driven shadows far afloat,
And follow to some dim retreating shore !
Oh, that I might old ecstasies new find,
And drink deep draughts of thy life-giving wind !

TO WINNEPESAUKEE.

O LAKE of changeful water,
And purple-shadowed hills,
Thy passionate wild beauty
My inward vision fills !

As unforgotten music
Awakes within the heart,
Thy loveliness uprises,
To make my sorrow start,

And I cry out in longing,
Thy shores again to seek,
And feel for one fresh moment
Thy winds upon my cheek.

O gentle-bordered river,
Would I could comfort take,
And by thy quiet windings
Forget my stormy lake !

BY THE CONNECTICUT.

INDIAN SUMMER.

O REMINISCENT days
That touch the heart to tenderness,
O sad and tranquil ways,
By waters rapt and motionless,
What silences are yours! No more
The little waves lap lovingly, that lately took
The rhythm of the wind.
The shadows in the quiet bays
Sleep undisturbed, and all the woods are
dumb;
More soft than falling sunbeams come
The fair down-faltering leaves,
And autumn pauses ere she stoops to bind
Her golden sheaves.
The waiting winds of Heaven will not stir,
Lest they shall roughly waken her —
Sweet summer, who has stolen back for one
last look,
And sits day dreaming by the shore.

BY LAKE WINNEPESAUKEE.

SURPRISAL.

I JOURNEYED south, and came upon the
spring,
Sweet loiterer by the way,
Dear child of unconcern. Oh, wondrous thing,
So to surprise her at her play,
With all her wreaths of green begun,
And lap heaped full of blossoms gay,
There holding joyful May-day in the sun !

IF my strength go from me
Take me to my South,
Where the salt tides enter
At the river's mouth ;

Where across the marshes,
Cloudy shadows pass,
Sail-boats slip and wander
Through the channelled grass ;

Where the jasmine tangles
Overrun the spring,
Mocking-birds in madness
Sing and sing and sing.

Let one friend go with me,
Northern born, as I,
That I be not lonely,
Underneath that sky.

There will I acquaint her
With each southern thing,
Violets and roses,
Vines and blossoming.

There into that sunshine
Shall we two go forth,
Loving yet the snow storms,
Of our own dear North !

SAVANNAH.

O VIOLETS and sunshine and vague thrills
That steal along the pulses of the air,
Japonicas and roses and the trills
Of little birds a-flutter everywhere !
Here in the sunny southland I am set
Amid the blossoms and the warm, sweet things ;
Green trees above my head are shower-wet
And all the air hath hint of olden springs ;
But, oh, to be again in my own land,
To look again upon my snowy hills,
To feel the clasp of a familiar hand,
And share again the fireside glow that fills
With warmth and cheeriness my little home
Amid the mountains whence the great winds
come !

SAVANNAH.

IN THE ROCKIES.

I AM a lover of New England ways,
Of country roadsides and familiar flowers,
Of haunts that I have known from early days,
And followed far through long and happy hours.
How may I look on the gigantic West?
How understand these mountains and ravines?
How cease from saying, But my heart loves
best
The quiet East and all its wooded scenes?
These are the mighty ones that I know not
Of ancient race and kingly lineage —
Too great for me, still holding unforgot
The lesser hillsides of my heritage,
Like one of lowly birth who homesick clings
To humble memories 'mid halls of kings.

NIGHT ON THE DESERT.

SILENCE hath sound, and darkness hath a
tongue

In all God's lands but this, where no sounds be.
There is a whisper in each slumberous tree
When every little bird his song hath sung ;
A myriad murmurs, when the stars are hung,
Uprise from wood and riverside and lea,
And all the dwellers by the ancient sea
Hear through the dark the eternal breakers
flung.

But here upon the desert is no voice,
No speech, no language, but the emptiness
Of the primeval void. No hills rejoice,
No quenchless streams and rivers leap to bless.
On these still sands, alone with outer space,
The starlit night is awful as God's face.

COLORADO SPRINGS.

HOMESICKNESS.

WHERE can I wander, where upon the
plain,
Who find not that for which my heart is fain,
Not one sweet meadow where the violets
wake,
Nor any woodland bordering a lake?
Where shall I search upon the mountain side,
Who cannot find the darlings of my pride —
The first arbutus, hid beneath the snow,
The star-sown wind-flowers that I used to
know,
The winter-green, the little partridge-vine
Bright-berried yearly underneath the pine?
Where shall I turn, who can no longer see
The far blue hills familiar unto me,
The hills of summer and the hills of snow
Where great winds drive and driven clouds
sweep low.
Too long my steps were taught New England
ways,
Too long my eyes looked out upon those days

To find their comfort here. Here sorrow
dwells,
And the wide future opens, dim and vast ;
But there forever lie the olden spells,
The balm of childhood and my hill-bound past !

COLORADO SPRINGS.

SAILOR BLOOD.

I COME of a race that loves the sea
And a driven ship is home to me.
On land I faint and thirst and fail
And grow heart-sick for the roaring gale ;
I dream of a home that hath no place,
And the feel of the spray upon my face.

The mountains rise to a barren sky,
And the level plains are parched and dry ;
Like a stagnant sea they mock my gaze
With their limitless horizon haze ;
They have no breath, they mock at me,
Whose soul cries out for the living sea.

I am scourged of the dust that sweeps the
 plains,
And the great dry winds that bring no rains ;
I am scourged of the dust, I am choked and
 blind,
And the health of waters I cannot find,
And my sailor blood makes wild in me
For the wet of the storm, and the salt of the
 sea !

Child of the sea, how can I bear
The wide still plains and the desert air ?
Sounds of the sea I hear by night
In dreams that have not sound nor sight,
And my heart doth yearn and strain by day
For the throb two thousand miles away.

Doth strain and hark for the distant roar
Of great tides booming along the shore ;
Like a prisoned gull my heart doth beat
For the great wet winds and the dripping sheet,
And the crested waves and the bounding spray,
And the storms that brood o'er the ocean gray.

I come of a race that loves the sea
And a driven ship is home to me.
On land I faint and thirst and fail
And grow heart-sick for the roaring gale ;
I dream of a home that hath no place,
And the feel of the spray upon my face !

IN a far land of sunshine,
I dreamed the sound of rain,
And in my far-off garden beds
I heard it fall again.

In a far land of sunshine,
I dreamed the smell of flowers,
My mignonette and heliotrope
New-freshened by the showers.

In a far land of sunshine,
I waked unto the light,
And wept to lose the sound of rain
That comforted my night.

I SEE these mountains now forever with
changed eyes,
Since I have seen them lovely through the
summer storms,
And heard their thunders roll, — their ceaseless
thunders roll.

No more I call them barren, that so rise
Unto the rains of heaven. No more my soul
Doth yearn unsatisfied in a far land, since it hath
seen

Hill bare and prairies over-crept with green.
Yea, even here I feel the distant sea
Pour out itself in rains to comfort me.

COLORADO SPRINGS.

MOTHER EARTH.

A STRANGER and an exile felt I here,
So unacquaint with mountain and with
plain,
So far removed from haunts that I hold dear,
My sea-girt lowlands and my hills of rain.
A stranger and an exile wandered I
With eyes that sought beyond the prairie's edge,
With homesick heart beneath an alien sky,
Foot-sore and faint for one familiar ledge —
Until I flung me down upon the ground,
Far in the cañon's hollow, with shut eyes,
And hearkened to the running water's sound
And felt the warm earth-contact, and grew wise.
O Mother Earth, here too, in cañon wild,
Or on brown prairie, am I still thy child !

COLORADO SPRINGS.

BODY AND SPIRIT.

THEN lie thou here, thou body of mine,
If so thou must.
My spirit thou canst not confine
In thy poor dust.
It wanders at will
Over the woodland and over the hill,
On and on to the windy shore,
On and out to the open sea.
It flies like a bird and circles free
O'er all the spots where it loves to be.
O'er all that it loved of yore
When thou, poor body, wast comrade true,
Lusty and strong to dare and do ;
Strong to climb to the topmost peak
Of the craggy mountain, grim and bare,
To lift the chin and hold the cheek
'Gainst the mighty winds of the upper air,
To battle the storm with stalwart breast,
To ride in glee on the wild wave's crest,
With gripping hand and steady wrist
To hold the tiller and straining sheet
On the stormy lake where the squall-winds meet.

Now lie thou here, thou body of mine,
If so thou must.
I'll not forget, good friend thou wast
In those old days of sky and pine
When body and soul were mated true,
Under the storm-clouds, under the blue!
With memories there, need I repine?
In this poor dust
The spirit still
Can wander at will
To all the spots where it loves to be;
Over the woodland, over the hill,
On and out to the open sea!

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